



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SPACE UTILIZATION FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR

### **Space Utilization Focus Group Facilitator**

Purpose: To contract with a focus group facilitator who has experience working with public libraries and non-profits, preferably in Massachusetts, helping to engage local residents and community stakeholders as part of a comprehensive library space planning and utilization process.

In the Fall of 2018, the Library conducted a building and space planning survey that was completed by 465 respondents. Of those respondents, 75 people expressed interest in participating on a focus group in order to discuss ways we can reorganize space within the Library without expanding our current footprint. A copy of the completed survey data and responses will be made available for review by the facilitator.

We will be conducting a comprehensive space planning and utilization process in two phases in order to engage the community in reallocating space in the Library as part of a review of the building in order to meet the current and future needs of the community. In **Phase 1** (late 2019 - early 2020), we will engage an experienced focus group facilitator who can consult with the Library's Building & Grounds Committee, which operates under the Board of Trustees, and facilitate up to 5 focus groups (with 8 – 12 people per group) who will focus on discrete areas and/or uses of the building in order to begin planning for reutilized spaces to meet the needs of the community now and in the future. While the 5 focus groups will focus on specific public service areas and/or uses within the building, the areas of focus will be determined in consultation with the facilitator. In addition, the composition of the focus groups will also be determined in discussion with the facilitator.

In **Phase 2**, following a separate RFP process (estimated to begin in the spring of 2020), we will be engaging a building and space planning consultant to work with the Building & Grounds Committee and the Board of Trustees on developing a written Space Utilization Plan that will incorporate the feedback we received from the focus groups and the survey that was conducted in the Fall of 2018, as well as identify the overall space planning utilization and reallocation, and the steps needed to complete that process. Included in the written Space Utilization Plan will be projected cost estimates for all costs associated with the reutilized areas.

When completed, the Space Utilization Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval, as well as to Town Administration, the Mass. Board of

Library Commissioners and local residents. We anticipate that the Space Utilization Plan will also be used for fundraising and development purposes.

### **Short Project Description**

The Library is interested in contracting with an experienced focus group facilitator who has worked with public libraries and similar non-profits to engage local residents as part of a space utilization effort associated with a space utilization plan. As noted previously, the Library is not planning to expand the current footprint of the building or to engage in major construction, however, moving non-load bearing walls will be considered as part of this process.

### **Project Components**

- The facilitator will work with the Building & Grounds Committee in order to engage the members of each of the 5 focus groups, with each group consisting of 8 – 12 people from the community, as noted above
- The facilitator will conduct 5 space planning brainstorming and feedback sessions with members of each of the 5 focus groups
- Each focus group session will last approximately 2.5 hours
- A note taker will be provided in order to document the focus group sessions
- No staff will be present during the focus group sessions, however, we anticipate some Library Trustees will be involved
- The facilitator will create a written report based on the feedback received during the focus group sessions and present it to the Building & Grounds Committee on a mutually convenient date and time to be determined in February 2020.

### **Project Budget**

Please contact Library Director Christopher Lindquist at 508-393-5025 x9 if you would like to discuss the proposed budget in more detail.

### **Projected Timeline**

- **November 14, 2019** Deadline for written proposals
- **November 19, 2019** Review of proposals by Building & Grounds Committee
- **November 25 – 27, 2019** In-person interviews with up to 3 candidates
- **December 2 - 5, 2019** Final selection by the committee
- **December 5 - 10, 2019** Contract signed
- **December 10 – 20, 2019** Tour of facility with selected facilitator (TBD)
- **January 6 – 15, 2020** General orientation session & tours for focus group participants (dates & times TBD)
- **January 21 – Feb. 20, 2020** Individual focus group sessions with each of the 5 focus groups (dates & times TBD)
- **February 21 – 30, 2020** Facilitator meets with Building & Grounds Committee to review the focus group results and submit a final report (date TBD)
- **March 10, 2020** Final report submitted to Board of Trustees

## **Questions and Required Information**

- Experience working with public libraries and similar non-profits in Mass. on facilitating focus groups focused on space reutilization planning efforts
- Experience consulting with Library Boards of Trustees and Committees
- List of professional references
- Description of the methods for conducting focus group sessions focused on space planning and space reutilization efforts

## **Organizational Background**

The Library is located in downtown Northborough, Mass. and is a municipal department of the Town of Northborough. The original Gale Library Building (c.1895) is still in use and retains the historic character of a 19<sup>th</sup> century New England Library. A modern 26,000 square foot addition opened in March 2009.

The Library is governed by a 9-member Board of Trustees who serve for 3-year terms. There are approximately 10 FTEs, including a professional Library Director, professional librarians in Children's, Teen and Adult Services, and support staff. The Library is open 53 hours per week Monday – Saturday year round. Starting on January 9, 2020, we will be restoring Thursday evening hours from 5:00 – 8:30 pm, when our total hours will increase from 53 to 56.5 hours per week.

The Library's annual operating budget is approximately \$850,000, which includes Town operating funds and state aid funds, supplemented by trust funds, annual appeal funds and support from the Friends of the Library.

In 2017 - 2018, the Board of Trustees engaged a fundraising consultant to conduct a Planning & Feasibility Study that included confidential interviews with 65 library supporters and prospective donors, with a potential goal of raising \$1.5 million in order to support increased operating hours, repurposed spaces, new furnishings and other building enhancements, as well as improvements in technology. A copy of the final report, which was completed in December 2018, will be made available for review by the facilitator. The Library is currently conducting its annual appeal with a goal of raising \$25,000. Under the auspices of the Board, the Library also formed a 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee this past year in order to celebrate the Library's Sesquicentennial (1868 – 2018), which culminated in a 150<sup>th</sup> Jubilee held at The Haven Country Club on April 6, 2019.

The Library is supported by a dedicated and active Friends group that donates approximately \$20,000 to the Library each year for programs and services that are not covered by Town operating funds. Last year, the Friends donated \$15,000 to the Library in order to establish a permanent endowment fund at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. The Board of Trustees will be considering making a similar deposit to the endowment fund in the near future.

More information about the Library is available on our website located at [www.northboroughlibrary.org](http://www.northboroughlibrary.org).

## **Contact Information and Deadline for Submissions**

Christopher J. Lindquist  
Library Director  
34 Main Street  
Northborough, MA 01532  
508-393-5025 x9  
clindquist@town.northborough.ma.us

### **Deadline: November 14, 2019 @ 5:00 pm**

Please send a PDF attachment via email to Christopher Lindquist @ [clindquist@town.northborough.ma.us](mailto:clindquist@town.northborough.ma.us). Proposals may also be mailed to the above address by the deadline noted above. Proposals received after 5:00 pm on November 14, 2019 will not be considered.

### **Project Evaluation**

Proposals will be evaluated and scored by the Library's Building & Grounds Committee, who will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees in its sole discretion, based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience of individual(s) who will consult with the Building & Grounds Committee in facilitating the focus group sessions during January – February 2020 (exact dates and times TBD)
- The overall fit with the Northborough Free Library's mission and values
- Responsiveness to the RFP
- Quality of the professional references

Following proposal scoring, the top ranked firms or individuals, including the staff to be assigned to consult with the Library will be expected to meet with the Building & Grounds Committee at the consultant's own expense for an onsite interview during the **November 25 – 27, 2019** timeframe (exact date and time to be determined). Upon selection of a finalist, the Northborough Free Library will enter into a contract with the chosen firm or individual. We will notify all applicants once a contract has been executed.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & CONDITIONS**

Statement of Non-Commitment Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Northborough Free Library to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in preparation of proposals responding to the RFP. The Trustees of the Northborough Free Library reserve the right to reject any or all proposals and re-advertise. All proposals become the property of the Northborough Free Library.